

New Program for Young Adults

In addition to drug addiction issues, young adult clients often struggle from a lack of education or employment and display poor decision making skills. Judge Dwyer and the SCDC team routinely observe how these shortcomings can negatively effect a client's progress in the program. As part of our ongoing mission to improve and expand client services, the Shelby County Drug Court is pleased to announce a new treatment program that focuses specifically on the young adult population.

Young adult clients, specifically males age 18-24, are eligible to participate in the program, which is being offered by both the HART Center and CAAP Inc. The program draws heavily on Moral Reconation Therapy or MRT, a form of treatment designed specifically to improve moral reasoning and decision making skills. Individual and group counseling sessions are used in concert with GED and job placement programs. Judge Dwyer and the SCDC team hope the Young Adult program will not only increase graduation rates among younger clients, but also aid in their overall personal development.

Upcoming Events

**Join Us For Our Annual
Hall of Fame Ceremony
and Holiday Party!**

**December 9th, 1PM
Auditorium of 201
Poplar**



Interview With A Graduate

Marty Petty graduated from the Shelby County Drug Court in September of 2012. Today is he active in the recovery community and works as a certified specimen collector and blood-alcohol technician with Mid-South Drug Testing.

Q: How did you end up in drug court?

A: It was August 2nd, 2011. I'll never forget it. I was buying crack cocaine; the cops pulled me over and found the dope. I had gotten by for so long my ego said I could just hide it from the cops and go home. Looking back on it, I think in the back of my mind I was glad I got caught. After so many years of using, your ego builds up and you convince yourself you can get away with anything.

I was put in to the back of a squad car but still had my phone in my back pocket so I called my wife, who happened to be at the grocery store. I told her I was being arrested and that she needed to call my dad so he could bail me out. She thought I was kidding; I had to convince her that I was serious.

During the next 30 days I went to several court dates and started the process to get in to drug court, but I still continued to get high. It wasn't the same though, my balloon was deflated and something had changed, I was tired of it all. But I stayed high until I was told I had been accepted in to the drug court program. When that happened, I broke down crying. I didn't know what was going to happen next, but I knew I had a chance to change. The chance to go even one day without using, the chance to be a father and a husband, and the chance to do something good with this life before it's over.

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Q: What was your first impression of Judge Dwyer and the drug court program?

A: I was ready. I wanted to change, but part of me still wanted to play the game. I thought about getting high and beating the system. I never cared for authority or legal figures. One day I was sitting in court and I watched somebody get locked up. Shortly after, Judge shook my hand, looked me straight in the eye, and said "I can be your best friend or your worst enemy." I decided right then to take him at his word. I took it as a challenge, to trust someone like him, and to do everything he asked me to do. I wanted Judge Dwyer as a friend and not an enemy. His encouragement made a big difference. He was the first person in a position of authority who treated me that way.

Q: How would you describe life after drug court?

A: I had been using for a long time before drug court. I am now learning things about myself that I never realized while I was drugging. I am enjoying that. It's hard to develop character when you exhibit none. I am finally growing as a person. Sometimes reality sucks, but I've learned I'd rather face reality than remain oblivious to life. I used to live from one high to the next; I never looked at the big picture or thought that there was light at the end of the tunnel. Drug court gave me new glasses with which to see the world. Now I live from one day to the next, considering every hour and minute. I work through life with the knowledge that when I have a bad day, it will pass. Everything I do, I do better sober.

Q: You graduated from drug court in September of 2012, what are you up to now?

A: I work for Mid-South Drug Testing, I am certified collector and breath-alcohol technician. I enjoy it. My job is also important to my recovery. You can't drug test people if you are using drugs yourself. It just adds another level of accountability.

Q: How have you maintained your sobriety?

A: My number one key to sobriety has been the expansion of my spiritual life. Going to church and surrounding myself with people who want to learn more about God's word. When you are trying to do the right thing, God clears a path.

Q: What advice would you give to someone who is struggling to succeed in the drug court program?

A: It's a choice between life and death. Some people get lucky and use for years before something happens, some use once or twice and then overdose. No one is promised another day. It's simple, if you want to succeed you have to listen, learn, and follow. In recovery, you have to be a follower. Sometimes I think when you follow; you become a leader even if you don't realize it. Everyone has their own recovery and their own needs. Never compare someone else's recovery to your own. Never judge someone else's recovery. Worry about yourself.

Folk's Folly Fundraiser A Success!

The Shelby County Drug Court Foundation recently held a fundraising event at Folk's Folly Prime Steak House. Danny Jones, a 2013 graduate of the program, was on hand to share his story of addiction and recovery with the crowd and helped to make the event a success. In all, board members raised over \$13,000 for drug court program participants. The funds raised will go toward transitional living services, bus passes, and a portion of treatment costs. Special thanks to board members Bill Lucchesi, Wight Laminack, and Ralph Michael Gagliano for planning the event.

If you would like to make a donation to the Shelby County Drug Court Foundation, please visit our website and click the 'Donate' button on the homepage.

<https://drugcourt.shelbycountyttn.gov>

